

SPONSA REGIS

NOVEMBER

1959



SPONSA REGIS

is a spiritual review for all Sisterhoods, published monthly, with ecclesiastical approval, by monks of St. John's Abbey, at Collegeville, Minnesota.

CONTENTS

November, 1959, Vol. 31, No. 3

Psychiatrists in a Convent <i>Sister Mary William, I.H.M.</i>	65
Psychological Testing and the Religious Life <i>Rev. Aubrey A. Zellner, O.S.B.</i>	68
Reason and the Religious Life <i>Rev. John H. McGoe, S.F.M.</i>	81
Notes on Spiritual Direction <i>Thomas Merton</i>	86
Book Reviews	95

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE: 1 year \$2.50, 2 years \$4.00 (outside U.S.A., same rate), single copies 25 cents. Address all new subscriptions, renewals, changes of address, ads, and editorial matter to *Sponsa Regis*, St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota (checks payable to *Sponsa Regis*).

Second Class Postage Paid at St. Cloud, Minnesota, Printed by the Sentinel Publishing Company, 413 East St. Germain, Saint Cloud, Minnesota.



*The Sisters of more than
fifty Motherhouses are
enthusiastically thankful
over the adoption of the*

SHORT BREVIARY

*as their Community prayer.
because of its*

- ◆ choice selection of texts
- ◆ superior arrangement
- ◆ spiritual commentary
- ◆ minimum paging,
maximum convenience
- ◆ elegant format

For brochure describing the **SHORT BREVIARY**
and giving background information on "The
Breviary Movement in American Sisterhoods",
write to: Father Director, Liturgical Press, Col-
legeville, Minn.

THE LITURGICAL PRESS

COLLEGEVILLE

MINNESOTA

Prepare for Christmas in a sacramental way with

FAMILY ADVENT CUSTOMS

Booklet contains: • blessing of Advent wreath • four Advent hymns
• traditional Catholic practices on Feasts of St. Nicholas, Immaculate Conception, St. Lucy • the "O" antiphons • Christmas cooking and decorating from a spiritual viewpoint • blessing of Christmas tree and Crib. **\$1.15**

CHRISTMAS TO CANDLEMAS

In a Catholic Home

Contents: • home liturgy on Christmas Eve; the Christ-Candle • morning and evening prayers based on the liturgy of the Christmas season • Christmastide in the kitchen • observances on: St. Stephen's Day; St. John's Day; New Year's Day; Holy Family; St. Canute; St. Agnes; St. Brigid; Candlemas. **\$2.10**

THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS BOOK

Texts are given for: • Home Blessings • Vernacular Adaptations of Liturgical Songs • Modern Christian Home Decorations • Staging of Mystery Plays • "Baptizing" New Year's Eve • Christmastide Family Prayers • Twelfth Night Party Customs, etc., etc. Superbly illustrated — 61 plates, 128 pages. **Paper, \$1.95**

THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS KIT

provides materials for a variety of "things to make" for children, young and old. For example . . .

1. **ADVENT TOWER**, constructed with 7 windows behind which are symbols of the "O" antiphons. Two extra windows for the Vigil and Christmas Day. A light placed within makes symbol glow with a pleasing lustre. 2. **JESSE TREE SYMBOLS**, 19 tree ornaments representing persons, events, prophecies from the Old testament having a bearing on Christ. Brief explanation with each drawing. 3. **CRIB WITH ELEVEN FIGURES**, background of stable and ox and ass. Easily assembled. Gives children (and grown-ups) a sense of contributing to the presentation of Christmas truth. 4. **MEAL PRAYER CARDS**, five cards giving meal prayers based on the Christmastide liturgy. Printed in large type, two colors; with illustration of Mother and Child. 5. **CHRISTMAS HOME DECORATIONS**, directions (with pictures) on how to use ordinary household objects to make useful and genuine items for home and friends, e. g., Christmas candles, evergreen pom-poms, window and holly sprays, log centerpieces, etc. **COMPLETE UNIT, \$1.75**

THE LITURGICAL PRESS

Collegeville, Minnesota



LIGHTNING MEDITATIONS

by Msgr. Ronald Knox

Something for very busy people: "sermons" that can be read in two minutes each but which will provide food for meditation indefinitely. \$3.00

DEATH

A Book of Preparation
and Consolation

Compiled by Barry Ulanov

"The best thoughts of the best minds" on death. All kinds of writing are included, from scripture to modern authors, but each selection is chosen to help us to a more hopeful view of our own death and to console us for the deaths of others. \$5.00

Order from any bookstore

For descriptions of all our new books, articles, news of authors write for Sheed & Ward's OWN TRUMPET. Our new address is—

SHEED & WARD
64 University Place New York 3

ONE NUN TO ANOTHER

by Sr. Mary Laurence, o.p.

Heart-to-heart talks with other nuns and with aspirants to religious life. A chatty book with a solid doctrinal background. Embraces the full gamut of religious spirituality.

\$2.50

SAINT DOMINIC

by Sr. Mary Jean Dorcy, o.p.

A modern biography in the best sense of the word. Although recent years have seen a flurry of biographies of this great saint, the work by Sister Mary Jean has a special interest for American readers.

\$3.25

FAITH IS THE SUBSTANCE

by Katherine Burton

Biography of an unforgettable spiritual and educational pioneer of the Midwest, Mother Theodore Guerin—foundress of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana.

\$4.50

At your bookstore

Herder of St. Louis
15-17 S. Broadway
St. Louis 2, Mo.



The light-bearers,
the palm-bearers,
the Christ-bearers
are the
saints of three Kingdoms—
the saints in Heaven,
the holy souls in Purgatory,
and we of the Mystical Body
on earth.

**LET THE NEW
FOUR-VOLUME
SAINT ANDREW
DAILY MISSAL**

keep you in touch spiritually
with the Communion of Saints.
You will appreciate the new
division of volumes, the
improved translation,
the additional prayers
of devotion.

FOR PRICES AND INFORMATION WRITE TO

THE E. M. LOHMANN CO.

413 - Sibley Street

St. Paul 1, Minnesota

Psychiatrists in a Convent

*Sister Mary William, I.H.M.
Los Angeles, California*

THERE ARE FEW groups in the Church in America which are in a better position to initiate programs which will be felt ultimately by a vast majority of the Catholic public than the major superiors of our religious communities of women. This is not to suggest that America has become a woman's world, but it is an undeniable fact that the Sisters, through their various apostolic works in health, education, and welfare, are vitally instrumental in conveying ecclesiastical thought and policy to the faithful.

It was because of their conviction that the Church cannot disdain or neglect any knowledge or legitimate technique which would enhance the effectiveness of her instruments that the College of St. Catherine and the Sister Formation Conferences of the N.C.E.A. co-sponsored a mental health institute for major superiors at the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul from August 16-25, 1959. Sister Annette, C.S.J., the chairman of the institute, is skilled and experienced in the organization of such programs. For a number of years she has served on the executive board of the now-famous mental health institutes for the clergy which are conducted annually at St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota.¹ Last year she directed a highly successful mental health institute for the major and local superiors of the St. Paul province of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

This year's participants included thirty-five general and provincial superiors and twenty-three administrative assistants, representing thirty-two congregations with members in fifty states. The combined memberships of these congregations is close to 27,000 Sisters who are working in over 2000 elementary and

¹ Kilian McDonnell, O.S.B., "Psychiatrists in an Abbey," *America*, 97:545-47.

secondary schools, 40 colleges, over 150 hospitals and nurses' training schools, and close to 100 social welfare agencies. The potential impact of a training institute destined to reach at least indirectly such a large and strategic group can hardly be overstated.

The major criteria for staff selection were professional excellence coupled with a knowledge of and sympathy with the work and special needs of religious. The staff included psychiatrists, psychologists, a sociologist, and a management expert. They were drawn from Canada, the east and west coasts, the middle west, and the deep south. In several members of the staff professional skill was combined with comparable competency in theology.

The success of the institute must be laid to several factors: the excellent planning, the securing of an outstanding staff, the conducive physical arrangements all contributed importantly. However, it is not merely an arbitrary judgment to state that the pre-institute interviews between the chairman or other staff members and many of the prospective participants was the factor which more than any other distinguished this institute from one which might have taken shape under the advice of experts only. The major superiors themselves turned out to be the experts concerning their special areas of need, and the chairman and staff cooperated in presenting them with a "tailor-made" program. Of the superiors who were interviewed in the months preceding the institute, ninety per cent felt that the program had been structured in such a way as to correspond to their stated needs to a decided degree. The remaining ten per cent were only slightly less emphatic.

The subjects covered by the various speakers provide a good resumé of the topics in which the superiors felt the greatest interest and concern. The relationship between emotional and mental health on the one hand and the moral and spiritual life on the other was the underlying theme of the entire institute, but the relationship was specified and clarified under such headings as: the role of the unconscious; a psychiatrist's view of authority; leadership, morale, and mental health in religious communities; how people behave when they are insecure, immature, anxious; mental health and chastity; the role of a Sister psychologist in a religious community. A series of lectures was

given on the contribution good management can make to good mental health.

Such a listing, although only partial, gives some notion of the coverage of the institute. It should be stated that no attempt was made to produce psychiatrists or counselors during this short training period, but it was the intention of the staff to create an awareness among the superiors of how they could contribute to the prevention of the abnormal and the development of the normal at all stages of growth. If there was one interviewing and therapeutic technique which impressed the participants more than another, it was the "interested ear" which listens and listens.

The scope of the institute was enlarged considerably in the small group discussions which followed each of the formal lectures. That the discussions were so comprehensive (they ranged widely into subjects which had not been introduced in the lectures) is testimony to the adaptability of the staff and, if one may so say, to the sophistication of the major superiors in matters psychiatric. Although less than a third of the participants had had any previous formal instruction in the problems of mental health, their breadth of experience and depth of practical understanding of these problems provided a rich soil in which the professional knowledge and techniques which were offered to them could take root.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about this institute is that it could have taken place at all. The time when it would have been close to an impossibility is within the memory of most of us. The gradual relaxation of tension between religion and psychiatry partially accounts for the growing interest of a number of groups within the Church in carefully examining those aspects of human behavior, long ignored or dogmatically dismissed or shrouded in mystery, which neither religion nor psychiatry singly can explain.

Of greater consequence than this new tolerance and employment of psychiatry, however, is the additional evidence which this event gives that the Church in America in general and her religious communities of women specifically are coming of age. The maturity which is necessary to admit and discuss freely with other major superiors the common difficulties and

ignorance which impede the progress of their various congregations is a trait which we have reason to hope will bear fruit not only in the fuller and more effective lives of individual religious, but in the extension and perfection of the apostolate through which these religious express their dedication to God.

A wider, more catholic conception of tradition is operative in this and similar endeavors to bring the Church to bear upon the world by using the truth which the "world" has disclosed. Rather than interpret tradition as a rigid hewing to the line of the past (which has been the defensive understanding of the term by many in the Church), Pope Pius XII exhorted religious superiors to conceive of tradition as a *living* guide to contemporary action. The function of tradition is to serve as a dynamic orientation, to provide continuity with the past, not to glorify it, least of all to attempt to render it eternal. This perversion of tradition often expresses itself in the tendency to confuse ends with means, even to canonize the latter. It is a peculiar threat to two types of societies: the young and insecure, and the rigid and decadent. The sponsors, staff and participants of this institute demonstrated clearly that they belong in neither of these classifications.

Psychological Testing and the Religious Life

Aubrey A. Zellner, O.S.B.
Collegeville, Minnesota

SCREENING OF CANDIDATES for religious life has been going on for a long, long time and no one will question the necessity of screening. However, the methods used to evaluate the suitability of candidates for religious life have been sometimes questioned, and with good reason. If the judgment of superiors

and committees and chapters have seemed haphazard at times, perhaps it has been because insufficient objective evidence has been available for making that judgment. Mistakes have been made. Infallability in this area will always be an impossible objective but it is only reasonable to make constant effort to improve.

If psychological tests are to be used to help screen candidates, two extremes must be avoided. Any reputable psychologist would emphasize this. First of all, psychological tests will *never* be a substitute for the experienced observation of candidates and prudent decisions made by responsible people. Thus it follows that if anyone is looking for a "pat answer" to the question of choosing vocations by screening she will be doomed to disappointment. Psychological tests should be used most properly as aids. One uses glasses as an aid to impaired eyesight. In many cases perfect 20-20 vision does not result even with the use of glasses. One uses aids for impaired hearing. Even with the best of hearing aids a person with impaired hearing may not achieve perfect hearing. Thus, to formulate the principle; if anyone tries to use psychological tests as a complete substitute for experience and observation she is misusing the tests.

The other extreme is this: if anyone makes a judgment on a given candidate and considers the psychological test valid only if it corroborates her judgment and considers the test invalid if it does not agree with her judgment, then most likely such a person is over-rating her private judgment. She really has no trust in the psychological test results and it can be considered a waste of time for her to go through the motions of administering the tests.

Somewhere between the two extreme views described we must look for a balanced mean if we want to make legitimate use of psychological tests for screening candidates for religious life.

Just as the admission practices of the various agencies of educational and occupational fields have been affected by the contributions of psychological testing, so it seems but natural that if superiors of religious groups are alert they will see to it that their admissions policies will involve the use of techniques

developed as the result of contemporary advances in the understanding of personality.

To this point Cardinal Tisserant has been quoted as saying that the mere fact that recent developments in the psychological and social sciences are entirely new to the thinking of people in religion does not give them a right to neglect these developments and shunt them aside.¹

The acceptance of the contributions of psychological testing in screening is but an initial step. In the application of the test results we have to consider the competence of the psychologist who makes the interpretations. It is not difficult to master the mechanics of administering and scoring most of the psychological tests on the market. Interpretation is the phase that demands experience and training. The psychologist must have a solid formation in her chosen field and she must have familiarity with related fields of study such as sociology, physiology, anthropology, philosophy and theology. Training in the use of psychological testing is never really complete. Considering current developments there is always more that can be learned. Training which is adequate to qualify for membership in the American Psychological Association and membership in the American Catholic Psychological Association should be a minimum.

In the field of psychological testing one finds a wealth of literature each month in periodicals and books. However, the literature that concerns itself with psychological testing and screening for life in religion is not very plentiful. Most of what has been done is found in magazine articles and also in unpublished dissertations.

There is an interesting book on the subject which has been released under the joint authorship of Antoine Benko and Joseph Nuttin published by the University of Louvain in French.² The main part of the book is concerned with the presentation of an experiment with the use of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory. The test items were translated into French and the test was given to 181 young religious who were studying philosophy or theology. It was also given to 79 novices in religion.

¹ Benko, Antoine and Joseph Nuttin, *Examen De La Personnalité Chez La Candidates A La Pretrise*, Louvain, Belgium, Publications Universitaires De Louvain, 1956, p. 109.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 1-138.

Selection was not determined by this testing. The test was just administered and the results kept for use in the experiment. The novices were observed carefully for two years after taking the test.

Out of the original 79 the number who had left the novitiate was ten. Of these, seven had shown abnormal peaks on several scales of the personality test. The other three left the novitiate for reasons of their own. Twenty-five novice masters and other competent and experienced spiritual directors prepared a questionnaire which they administered to the 181 young religious mentioned above. The questionnaire, together with an interview, was used to gain an insight into the degree of the subjects' adaptation to their vocation and to religious life. The symptoms of maladjustment thus obtained were compared with the profiles which resulted from the Minnesota Personality Test Profiles of the same person. The results were conclusive. Those who had abnormal peaks on two or more of the scales in the personality test - there were eight in this group - also showed themselves maladjusted in the special questionnaire concerning their vocation and the records of the interviews that accompanied the questionnaire. Although the authors of the book say that there is room for more study and continued research, the Minnesota Personality Test has proved that it has considerable value as a device in screening candidates for religious life.

A very brief history of the use of psychological testing and screening is in order here. Father Verner Moore of the Order of Saint Benedict (now a Carthusian) was teaching at The Catholic University of America in Washington in the 1930's. In the early part of that decade he received a grant from the Carnegie Foundation to investigate insanity among priests and religious. He sent inquiries to practically all the asylums of the country and got almost 100% response. His objective was to find the percentage of priests and nuns and brothers who had been hospitalized for mental disorders. His results were published in the *Ecclesiastical Review* during the year 1936.³

³ Moore, Verner Thomas, "Insanity in Priests and Religious," *American Ecclesiastical Review*, Volume 95 (November, 1936) pp. 485-498; and "The Detection of Prepsychotics Who Apply for Admission to the Priesthood or Religious Life," *Ibid.*, (December, 1936), pp. 601-613.

He found that for 100,000 priests, there were 446 who were insane; for 100,000 nuns, there were 428 who were insane from the active orders and 1034 from the cloistered orders; and for 100,000 brothers in religion there were 418 insane. For the general population the figures showed that 595 were insane. Thus it was evident that the record for priests and nuns and brothers was better than that of the average population. It should be noted that these figures in the case of priests and brothers especially were prorated because there are but 70,000 priests in the United States even now and this is more than twenty years later. However, it is acceptable to prorate figures this way within limitations to give a more understandable figure for the ordinary reader.

In studying his data Father Moore made the observation that certain prepsychotic types seem to drift toward religion and religious life. In the number of religious who had been institutionalized, he found a greater proportion of schizophrenics - the type that has lost the proper sense of reality - than could be found in institutionalized people in the general population. A similar survey by Sister William Kelley was conducted twenty-one years later (1957).⁴ It concerned nuns only and, in the main, corroborated the findings of Father Moore. Her study showed less contrast in the number of insane among sisters from active orders and sisters from cloistered orders. The hypothesis is proffered by her that excessive work loads on active order sisters and the stress of these times cause psychological breakdowns. The writer of this article suggests that cloistered orders have, in many cases, learned a lesson from dealing with their problems and may have become more selective.

Much valuable research has come out of Fordham University in recent years in the use of psychological testing and its use in screening candidates for religion. Undoubtedly most of this has been stimulated by Father William Bier who now directs the department of psychology and who did a doctoral dissertation at Catholic University in 1948 using the Minnesota Personality Test to compare religious groups with other groups. Significant studies have been done recently at Catholic University

⁴ Kelley, Sister M. William, "The Incidence of Hospitalized Mental Illness Among Religious Sisters in the United States," *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, Volume 115 (July, 1958), pp. 72-76.

and also in other universities throughout the country, not only by Catholics but by others as well.

The question comes to mind as to how trustworthy these tests are. That is a fair question and deserves an answer. We are in an area where we will perhaps never have complete certainty, but we can say with assurance that we have much more certainty than we had in the past with subjective and sometimes superficial devices which have been used for the screening of candidates for religion. Father Plé, a Dominican who is editor of *La Vie Spirituelle*, has said that if the human mind cannot probe the mysterious interplay of Divine Grace and human freedom after an event has taken place, it is even more difficult to predict with absolute certainty how a person will freely cooperate with Divine Grace in the future while living the religious life.⁵ In other words, he means to suggest the question that when a person has left religion and apostacized, was it because of infidelity to the religious vocation or was it because the person in question had no vocation originally, or was it because the person was psychologically unsuitable for the kind of life demanded by the vows in religion?

Considering everything, we can use tests with confidence even though we cannot lay claim to absolute certainty when we screen candidates for postulancy or for the novitiate. Those who have experience in directing the training of candidates know full well that there always will be some who will give up the idea of embracing religious life even though such persons are psychologically fit according to every available norm and there seem to be definite signs of a vocation present. To suggest that such a person runs a serious risk of losing her soul if she returns to the world is dangerous thinking. Did the young man who kept the commandments and refused the personal call of Christ go to hell? Who will dare to say so?

It seems to the writer that screening with psychological tests can be employed on three general levels. Some religious superiors will demand of each candidate not only a personality test like the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory but also deep-probing tests like the Rorschach and Thematic Apper-

⁵ Plé, Albert, "Unconscious Attraction to the Religious Life," *Religious Life: II Vocation*, Westminster, Maryland, 1952, p. 110.

ceptive Test (TAT) besides an interview by a psychiatrist. This seems to the writer to be asking too much in the way of testing of the candidate. The principle the more tests the better is not valid for the screening of candidates. To test too much may put the whole testing program in jeopardy. The second general level of screening involves a procedure where the superior demands the Minnesota Personality Test and screens with deeper type tests all candidates who score outside one standard deviation from the mean. That means about thirty per cent of the applicants will be subject to the more probing tests such as Rorschach and TAT. The third general level might be described as one in which the Minnesota Personality Test or another such test is administered and applicants who score outside two standard deviations from the mean will be given additional testing of the more probing type which means that about two percent of applicants will be subjected to the more extensive tests. In all levels an interview should be demanded at least by directors of vocations or the mistress of postulants.

The question is whether a psychiatric interview should be demanded of all candidates or merely of a certain percentage - in this case of thirty per cent or of two percent. It seems most reasonable to suggest as a practical measure that if a religious community is considering setting up a program for screening candidates, it is most desirable and perhaps most necessary that some priest or nun or brother who is trained in psychological testing and has had some experience in this type of work is called in to explain the workings of such a program. He should be available for questions from all members of the religious group both those who will be in administrative positions and all others. It will be the task of this so-called expert to explain the strength and limitations of a psychological testing program for screening and also to dispell erroneous notions so as to guard against the program being considered a threat or unreasonable in any way.

There are different kinds of tests that have been perfected and that can be used in psychological screening. These will be considered very briefly and then something will be said about the moral problems involved in testing. First of all, there are intelligence tests - tests of ability to do academic work. For

any kind of religious life, a good average intelligence is necessary. We must have some assurance that the candidate understands instruction and the obligations of the life she intends to embrace. She must take vows and she must understand what the vows imply. There is evidence to show that when a person is limited intellectually and therefore struggles to keep up with training demands she tends to develop serious emotional conflicts because of constant frustrations.

After intelligence testing we must consider achievement testing. We have national achievement tests which have been standardized over the whole country, or at least standardized for certain specific areas. In addition to testing in individual schools it is worthwhile to know how a candidate can perform on standardized tests of achievement.

Another type of test is the interest test. There are many types but perhaps the most commonly used are the Kuder Interest and the Strong Interest Tests. Much research has been done on both these tests. A priest of St. Bonaventure's University in New York has worked out a priest scale for the Strong Test.⁶ He validated the scale by administering the test to priests over the country so that it is possible to compare the interests of a candidate with the typical interests of priests. No one would consider using the priest scale of this test as a sole criterion for judging a vocation to the priesthood, yet it gives a vocational director a lead, and if there is evidence of a social service interest in the candidate one has further basis for judging whether the candidate is considering life in religion for worthy reasons or not.

There is a Strong Interest Test Profile for women. There is a form for women on the Kuder Test also. It would be most desirable if some nun searching for a dissertation topic would work out a scale on the Strong Test to determine if there is a typical interest pattern for nuns. Candidates for the convent could be evaluated in terms of their interests and the typical pattern for nuns. Perhaps the same could be done with the Kuder Interest Test.

⁶ Lahota, Brian, *Vocational Interests of Catholic Priests*, Washington, D.C., Catholic University Press, 1948.

A final type of test that can be used in screening candidates is the personality test. This is perhaps the area in which most people have been critical and anxious. One test which is commonly used has been referred to before, namely, the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory.⁷ It has been used extensively and it has been subjected to careful research with practically all types of people. It consists of 566 items which are answered as true or false. There is a card form and a booklet form. The card form in a box is the original form of the test and it is perhaps a bit more sensitive than the booklet form. In the former no writing is done. Cards printed with short questions are merely put into compartments labelled "true" or "false" or "cannot say." The Minnesota Test is valuable in that it has a lie detecting scale. It even measures unconscious falsification and exaggerated defense against being evaluated by the test.

Briefly, the Minnesota Test will bring out evidence of hypochondriasis or over-concern about health, depression or feelings of uselessness, nervousness or tension, hostility and aggression, effeminacy or masculinity, suspiciousness, compulsiveness about details and indecisiveness, grasp of reality or extremely bizarre thinking, hypomania or exaggerated drive often coupled with a tendency to want to reform others, and finally, sociability. A test of this kind is not sufficient to evaluate the personality of a given individual. An autobiography is desirable together with interviews by a spiritual director and in some cases by a psychiatrist to supplement test results.

In addition to the Minnesota Test there are many other so-called projective tests. The two most common ones have been mentioned, namely, the TAT or Thematic Apperceptive Test, and the famous Rorschach Ink Blot Test. These tests are not easy to administer or to score and interpret. Considerable training in the dynamics of personality is necessary before one can begin to handle these two tests with accuracy.

If personality tests are to be used it is most important that definite rules and objectives be formulated and a confidential method of filing results be determined before the testing program is initiated.

⁷ Hathaway, S. R. and J. C. McKinley, *Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory*, New York, The Psychological Corporation, 1951.

When a chapter or a large group has to decide on the acceptance of candidates it does not seem desirable that professional psychological information be presented in technical terms. Technically expressed test results are either meaningless to the non-psychologist or they are easily misinterpreted. They tend to be threatening sometimes to those who have to decide on acceptance of candidates because practically everyone must admit some degree of emotional instability some time or other. Perhaps it would be desirable for a committee to screen the candidates and then one individual qualified present the findings of the committee on an individual candidate to the chapter or the large religious group. The physical examination of candidates for the novitiate is important and it seems desirable that it be done by a doctor who is psychologically oriented or at least has had some training in psychology and has some knowledge of the pattern of living that will be demanded by the religious group.

What do we mean by "vocation?" It seems to the writer that following St. Thomas we have to consider the internal aspect and the external aspect of a vocation. The internal aspect involves God's grace which we no doubt will never be able to measure. The external aspect which in truth gives the vocation reality is the call to the religious life by the religious superior. The latter needs all possible information to make a prudent decision. If we are realistic we must admit that recommendations from pastors and others acquainted with the prospective candidate are often vague or have little meaning and sometimes are very misleading. For a vocation to religious life one needs proper qualities of mind and body. We have the saying *Gratia Supponit Naturam*—grace builds on nature. The *Natura* is certainly important. If we routinely demand a physical examination to check on heart and lungs and the like why should we not demand some examination to check on emotional stability, since there are valid means available for doing so?

Recent responsible writers have stated that superiors are not only free to use these psychological tests but that they have some obligation to do so. Part of the argument is that superiors find themselves occupied with problems of emotionally disturbed subjects who were originally unsuitable for the life they were

allowed to choose. Father Plé has said that if psychologists can give us some warning at the outset, it is a sin not to ask for their services when deciding to accept or to reject certain candidates for religion.⁸ Church Law says that candidates must have the qualities of body and mind which render the individual fit to bear the burden of the religious state. If it is a burden, then these individuals should not only have average mental stability but a stability better than average, because the life these individuals intend to embrace in a religious community is a holocaust and a martyrdom.

What are some of the indices to consider in a candidate? One writer says that the candidate should have maturity, balance, stability, good control and adjustment.⁹ More specifically another says that he would rule out candidates who are the shut-in type, unsociable, irritable, violent and uncontrollable in their temper.¹⁰ Another says that paranoid suspiciousness, definite deviant sexuality tendencies should rule out a candidate.¹¹ Certain neurotic types seem unsuitable for religious life. These include hypochondriacs who have a very abnormal concern about health, the obsessive-compulsive type whose problem shows up in severe scrupulosity and extreme indecisiveness. We do not refer to a casual or intermittent type of scrupulosity but one that is persistent and does not ever really seem to clear up.

As far as doubtful cases are concerned, most writers seem to agree that we should be severe rather than lenient, especially when it comes to apply for vows or even the novitiate. The Church and religious groups have rights. The common good should prevail over the demands of the individual candidate, even if she has relatives in religion. It is mistaken charity to accept doubtfully mature and questionably stable individuals into religion. We are unrealistic if we look for a miraculous change in an individual through training in religious life. The chances are not good that there will be basic changes in psychological functioning. There is definite evidence, carefully com-

⁸ Plé, Albert, *Op. Cit.*, p. 109.

⁹ Bier, William, "Psychological Testing of Candidates and the Theology of Vocation," *Review for Religious*, Volume 12 (November 15, 1953), p. 296.

¹⁰ Moore, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. 95, p. 601-614.

¹¹ Vaughan, Richard, "Moral Issues in Psychological Screening," *Review for Religious*, Volume 16 (March 15, 1957), p. 68.

piled, which shows that the effect of religious life is to extend and to deepen the pre-existing psychological tendencies and thus produce a quantitative rather than a qualitative change in the psychological functioning of the individual religious.¹²

What if a candidate absolutely refuses to submit to psychological testing before the postulancy or the novitiate? It seems to the writer, in agreement with responsible authorities, that the superior can refuse such a person entrance. The very fact of refusal seems to indicate that something is wrong. The testing and its results are to the individual's advantage as well as to that of the community. The superior is within her rights in asking for both physical and psychological tests. If the testing program detects the grossly abnormal applicant and screens this person out then it seems to the writer a very fundamental good is accomplished. Abnormal individuals are not easily recognized even by persons with good intuition and experience. Sometimes the grossly abnormal individual masks her abnormality. There are some individuals who are so perceptive that they can present a false front in an interview even with a carefully prepared questionnaire administered by a vocational director with a tremendous amount of experience. There is objective evidence that trained individuals have a hard time determining the intellectual functioning level of an individual much less her psychological and emotional functioning level merely by an interview. Few authorities would dispute the fact that intelligence testing is easier than personality testing.

To accept a candidate conditionally is a very questionable procedure. In most cases she will not leave voluntarily. A delayed decision becomes more and more difficult to make. Furthermore, after a candidate is in religion for a time she tends to devise defenses to hide serious weaknesses. There are cases on record where individuals held themselves together with tremendous effort until final acceptance and then a complete breakdown or disintegration occurred. The individual then becomes the expensive charge of the religious community.

¹² Mastej, Sister Martina, *A Study of Influence of Religious Life on the Personality Adjustment of Religious Women as Measured by the Modified Form of the MMPI*, New York, Fordham University, unpublished doctoral dissertation, 1957.

The seriously emotionally disturbed individual in religion is a scandal to the faithful. This is a serious consideration. If an applicant's state of mind is uncertain, it seems to the writer that most psychologists would say that this is evidence that she is a poor risk. She becomes more of a risk if her state of mind is uncertain before she makes temporary vows and continues to be a serious risk if she wavers right up to the time of making perpetual vows. To enter the novitiate or to make temporary vows just to give religious life a trial shows too much indecision. A religious must make up her own mind and come to a decision on her own. If someone in authority undertakes to make the decision for the wavering religious, this person is opening up possibilities for a petition for dispensation in later months or years.

When a candidate is refused admission even to postulancy it is not the obligation of the superior to tell the individual just why in specific detail she was refused. A general statement is sufficient. If a candidate seems to need psychiatric help, the superior can recommend it and perhaps she should do so.

As to persons who are already in vows, there is dispute as to whether the superior can demand psychological testing. Certainly the superior is free to urge testing and point out its benefits. Church Law does not allow the superior to demand a manifestation of conscience. The law does not forbid voluntary manifestation of conscience. Taking a personality test does not involve a manifestation of conscience. Furthermore, the writer has examined almost all recent pronouncements of the Holy See on psychological testing and listened to discussions of these pronouncements by conscientious and competent Catholic authorities and finds there is no evidence in these pronouncements on which to base disapproval of such testing. At its annual meeting two years ago in New York the members of the American Catholic Psychological Association discussed the topic of psychological testing in the light of statements from the Holy See in recent years.

It has been said that in God's providence we will always have difficult members in religious groups to help make life a source of virtue and sanctification for others. It seems unreasonable to knowingly contribute to the difficulty of others

in religious life or the problems of the faithful in parishes by admitting psychologically unsuitable persons to religion. Psychological Testing has a function to perform in the evaluation of candidates for religious life. Such a program is in keeping with the spirit of religious vocation as understood by The Church.

Reason and the Religious Life

*John H. McGoey, S.F.M.
Harbour Island, Bahamas*

BY AND LARGE most nuns are engaged in educational, social or hospital work of some kind. Their work has been wonderful and its value to the Church in the last hundred years of America's fantastic development cannot be over-emphasized. However the nuns themselves are realizing more and more the shortcomings of their work. They too are looking for defects, some of the missing factors. The pressure of present-day living has revealed that no educational system is meeting the manifold requirements of the modern school, that no institution can be given full marks for adequacy in its field.

The fact that priests and nuns are admitting this much against their own wishes, is the most encouraging feature of the search for solutions. For, let us face it. Be we ever so dedicated, God-fearing, spiritual and religious, we are very proud indeed and it is difficult for us to admit any appreciable degree of failure in our most earnest undertaking, the education of the Catholic children and the administration of our Catholic institutions of charity.

Many single-minded religious are truly hopeful that if the search for the missing factors which have adversely affected their work is humbly undertaken, some things might be uncovered to give new life to their highest spiritual aspirations and undertakings, inducing a fervent renewal of their personal dedication.

For the present we will skip a very important phase of this search. Our concern here is not an investigation of our failures,

but a search for the causes of the failures. Therefore, for economy of words let us say, "All right, we have failed. What about it? What causes can be discovered and dealt with? What plans can be formulated which will prove fruitful in improving our work?" No realist can expect to be an unqualified success, but almost anyone can avoid being an unqualified failure by improving her performance. Improve the religious and you improve her work. How can she be improved?

Two things militate against effective work which if dealt with or even considered a little more could probably improve the performance of a religious in the active fields.

First, God has given her two lights for the road through life — the light of faith and the light of reason. Sometimes the religious relies so much on the light of faith that she neglects the light of reason which has a very important role in her life and work. Sometimes she is not trained to think and, rightly or wrongly, may consider thought superfluous since, so she thinks, she can get all her answers from revelation and obedience.

Second, too seldom does the religious make a real, working distinction between emotion and thought. Many times she assumes she is thinking when in reality she is but emoting. Most people having strong feelings on a matter assume they have big, strong thoughts about it. But the opportunity to put these big, strong thoughts in words may find them speechless or at least lacking coherence, just because emotion rather than passion has been dominant, strong feelings covering weak thoughts.

There is, of course, a world of difference between emoting and thinking. Religious should be able to seek answers from their minds rather than their emotions, appreciating the latter for what they are without letting them interfere with the right use of reason; certainly never permitting them to master the reason. The proper development of reason with emotional maturity or control makes objective thinking a possibility and good judgment its corollary. Having given their talents to the Lord, good judgment makes it possible to use these to their fullest degree for Him. Otherwise they lie in moth-balls like the dowry: to be received again if the religious returns to the world.

The competent consultant often sees his client solve his own erstwhile impossible problem when he simply gets him to put it

in words. What had been bounding around inside his head with convincing pseudo-realism loses both its agility and realism when it appears in the open, tied to words objectively appraisable. There, it can be dismissed as the inconsequential thing it is, or solved quite easily, plainly seen or heard as it is for the first time.

The failure to make full use of the light of reason, (or relying exclusively on the light of faith) combined with the ordinary confusion of feelings with thoughts can make the religious too subjective in her life and work. She finds herself thrown into confusion when despite sincere motives her plans and programs remain ineffectual. The tragedy is that, incapable of being objective, she mistakes the motive for the deed. Her confusion is compounded when she willingly accepts the good motives of others for good deeds. Unthinking, she may fail to perceive that an erroneous plan or program remains erroneous even with the best motives in the world.

Often enough it is a neglected reason which lets a religious find herself in that all too common enigma of religious life, the breakdown. Because of the purity of her motives she expected that God directly, rather than through her own good judgment enlightened by faith would save her from her own excesses. Apparently as dedicated as could be, devoted to the rule, the community and God, she simply could not keep up the pace she set for herself. Having set out to be the best sister in the community, she never for a moment suspected that it was more for her own satisfaction than for God's glory that she worked so hard. She just could not have lived with herself if her work was inferior. The moral being: it is a wise man who knows his own limitations. There is a remarkable amount of detachment in the religious truly working for God rather than herself. And detached effort always produces much more for much less.

The least criticism of her person or her work quickly reveals to the thoughtful nun just how lacking in detachment she really is. The emotional nun is deeply hurt just because she is so sure she wants to give herself completely to God, heart and soul, and could not have expended more effort than she did in her work. Without reason she has accepted respect and exemption from criticism as her right by dedication when Christ so obviously promised her the very opposite. She has been reading even the

Gospels subjectively, so she has not suspected that God in spite of her has been endeavoring to grace her soul with some humility.

Typical of the domination of reason by emotion is the religious who, though admittedly dedicated, is not a little obnoxious. Her pride seems obvious to all but herself. Her apparent holiness and her equally apparent pride can come only from the fact that her standards of holiness are largely her own. She thinks she truly pursues holiness when she follows these subjective standards. On the contrary, to be holy she must follow the objective norms of holiness. This normally requires a developed reason and great emotional control. And even with this, needless to say, none ever succeeds in being completely objective. However, the saintliest saint is undoubtedly the one whose subjective grasp of holiness most closely approximates objective holiness, holiness as it really is, not as she considers it to be. Complete objectivity comes only when the soul is immersed in Objective Truth Itself, God in heaven. Meanwhile reason enlightened by faith is the road to whatever degree of objectivity is obtainable in the here and now.

There are some things about religious life which may discourage the use of reason and lead to the emotional rather than rational approach to one's work; which can produce undue emphasis on small things.

In religious life if one just minds her own business and follows the leader she will probably be all right, not too productive or masterful, but safe. She will never be a leader but she will be safe. And that to those having a great desire to get to heaven some day is not to be minimized.

Most religious too come from good backgrounds; good homes and families; middle-class environments where good example prevailed and solid parish-life flourished with its devoted parish priest and well-managed parochial school. Sin was the most real danger in this life and a thing to be avoided above all else were the occasions of sin. There was certainly more emphasis on fleeing occasions of sin than on developing the resources to meet the necessary occasions. The religious life in which one was withdrawn from most of the occasions of sin will fail in its mission if the religious training emphasizes only fleeing the occasions of sin without a corresponding emphasis on the religious resources employed in

meeting the necessary danger of sin; or what is more frequent, the occasion of a fault which is not a sin. The result of such education may well be the trained coward.

This is not a happy thought, but it has more than an element of truth in it. A policeman or fireman must realize his limitations, but it is his duty to face dangers. The same is true with religious. This is why St. Madeleine Sophie wanted her religious to be "manly." But some religious seek to be dependent where obedience does not call for dependence. This over-emphasis on dependence can make cowards who flee a danger before facing the fact that it might well be a necessary one.

Religious superiors want the minds of the nuns to be trained to the highest degree. Here I do not refer to academic training except insofar as the academic is a necessary part of any mind's training. But every mind should be trained to do the work it was created for, to think. The light of reason in the religious should be a shining, polished thing, synchronized with the light of faith to make an alert individual able to contribute with the thinkers of the world to the solution of the problems of humanity.

Is there any gauge by which one can measure the development of reason, emotional control, and improvement in one's judgment? Undoubtedly there are many ways this can be done, but certainly an indication of these is the increased acceptance of criticism. Caution should be taken lest acceptance of criticism be confused with the use of criticism. One can have a great willingness to accept criticism without the intelligence to recognize its value and make use of it.

No person made of flesh and blood will develop a natural appetite for criticism, but since the highest form of humility is love of humiliation, a supernatural appetite for it can be acquired. It cannot be loved for itself but for what it does for the soul. Love of humiliation is a rational thing only when the reason appreciates its advantages and the emotions are not able to dissuade the mind from objectively examining its content.

Everyone wants approval of her efforts. Having expended her best efforts the religious loves them to be successful. However, if objective, she realizes there is something more important. Unlike the woman showing her new hat to her husband while

waiting for him to say, "It's lovely dear," the religious knows that if such a woman makes a liar out of him, she has not much of a husband. The intelligent religious without being morbid looks on objective constructive criticism as representing the whole sphere of self-improvement for herself as a religious and as an apostle. The things in which her critics agree with her are not very important. These represent her present accomplishments. The things in which some thinker can point out an area of improvement give her a new lease on life, an opportunity to run her five talents up to ten.

Surely a lot has been taken for granted in insisting that her work in the educational and administrative fields has been a failure. What is now important is that the religious be on the alert for means of improving her effectiveness. Having higher motives for her work she should be more eager than the secular to keep abreast of the latest developments. There is far more than personal prestige at stake in the religious' performance. There is the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

If we love our minds and try to sharpen them as the precious tools for making a better religious life and gaining greater knowledge of God; if we learn to accept our feelings for what they are; if we learn to be objective in our approach to holiness and religious living, could we possibly avoid a better performance of our duty?

Notes on Spiritual Direction

*Thomas Merton
Trappist, Kentucky*

THE ORIGINAL, PRIMITIVE meaning of spiritual direction suggests a particular need connected with a special ascetic task, a peculiar vocation for which a professional formation is required. In other words, spiritual direction is a monastic concept. It is a practice which was unnecessary until men withdrew from the Christian community in order to live as solitaries in the desert.

For the ordinary member of the primitive Christian community there was no particular need of personal direction in the professional sense. The bishop, the living and visible representative of the apostle who had founded the local church, spoke for Christ and the apostles, and, helped by the presbyters, took care of all the spiritual needs of his flock. The individual member of the community was "formed" and "guided" by his participation in the life of the community, and such instruction as was needed was given first of all by the bishop and presbyters, and then, through informal admonitions, by one's parents, spouse, friends and fellow Christians.

But when the first solitaries retired to the desert, they separated themselves from the Christian community. Their departure into the wilderness was approved and in a sense canonized by no less a bishop than St. Athanasius, soon followed by many others. But they lived solitary and dangerous lives, far from any Church, and rarely participated even in the mystery of the Eucharist. Yet they had gone into the wilderness to seek Christ. They had, like Christ, been "led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted." And, like the Lord Himself, they were to be tempted by the evil one. Hence the need for "discernment of spirits" — and for a director.

We look back after many centuries upon the Desert Fathers and interpret their vocation in the light of our own. After all, they were the "first religious." We do not see how very different, in many ways, were their lives from ours. In any event, their deliberate withdrawal from the normal life of the visible Church was a very perilous spiritual adventure, and an innovation of a type that would undoubtedly be considered out of the question by many today. In this adventure, certain safeguards were absolutely essential, and the most obvious and important of these was the training and guidance of the novice by a "spiritual father." In this case, the spiritual father replaced the bishop and presbyter as representative of Christ. And yet there was a difference because there was nothing hierarchical about his function. It was purely and simply charismatic. It was sanctioned by the father's own personal holiness. The greatest abbots in the Egyptian and Syrian deserts were generally not priests.

This brings us to the root meaning of spiritual direction. It is a continuous process of formation and guidance, in which a Christian is led and encouraged *in his special vocation*, so that by faithful correspondence to the graces of the Holy Spirit, he may attain to the particular end of his vocation and to union with God. This union with God signifies not only the vision of God in heaven but, as Cassian specifies, that perfect purity of heart which, even on earth, constitutes sanctity and attains to an obscure experience of heavenly things. Spiritual direction was, then, one of the essential means to monastic perfection.

This description of spiritual direction brings out certain important differences between direction and counselling, or direction and psychotherapy. Spiritual direction is not merely the cumulative effect of encouragements and admonitions which we all need in order to live up to our state in life. It is not mere ethical, social or psychological guidance. It is *spiritual*.

But it is important for us to understand what this word "spiritual" means, here. There is a temptation to think that spiritual direction is the guidance of one's spiritual activities, considered as a small part or department of one's life. You go to a spiritual director to have him take care of your spirit, the way you go to a dentist to have him take care of your teeth, or to a barber to get a haircut. This is completely false.

The spiritual director is concerned with the *whole person*, for the spiritual life is not just the life of the mind, or of the affections, or of the "summit of the soul" — it is the life of the whole person. For the spiritual man (*pneumatikos*) is one whose whole life, in all its aspects and all its activities, has been spiritualized by the action of the Holy Spirit, whether through the sacraments or by personal and interior inspirations. Moreover spiritual direction is concerned with the whole person not simply as an individual human being, but as a son of God, another Christ, seeking to recover the perfect likeness to God in Christ, and by the Spirit of Christ.

The spiritual man is one who, "whether he eats or drinks or whatever else he does, does all for the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:30). Again, this does not mean that he merely registers, in his mind, an abstract intention to glorify God. It means that in all his actions he is free from the superficial automatism of

conventional routine. It means that in all that he does he acts freely, simply, spontaneously, from the depths of his heart, moved by love.

The whole purpose of spiritual direction is to penetrate beneath the surface of a man's life, to get behind the facade of conventional gestures and attitudes which he presents to the world, and to bring out his inner spiritual freedom, his inmost truth, which is what we call the likeness of Christ in his soul. This is entirely a supernatural thing, for the work of rescuing the inner man from automatism belongs first of all to the Holy Spirit. The spiritual director cannot do such a work himself. His function is to verify and to encourage what is truly spiritual in the soul. He must teach others to "discern" between good and evil tendencies, and to distinguish the inspiration of the spirit of evil from those of the Holy Spirit.

A spiritual director is, then, one who helps another to recognize and to follow the inspirations of grace in his life, in order to arrive at the end to which God is leading him. And this, as we have said, originally presupposes a special vocation. A spiritual director was necessary above all for one who had been called to seek God by an unusual and perilous road. It must not be forgotten that the spiritual director in primitive times was much more than the present name implies. He was a spiritual father who "begot" the perfect life in the soul of his disciple by his instructions.

• • • • •

The first thing that genuine spiritual direction requires, in order to work properly, is a normal, spontaneous human relationship. We must not suppose that it is somehow "not supernatural" to open ourselves easily to a director and converse with him in an atmosphere of pleasant and easy familiarity. This aids the work of grace: another example of grace building on nature.

It is a paradox that those who are the most rigidly "supernatural" in their theory of the spiritual life, are sometimes the most "natural" in practice. To imagine that faith can only operate in a situation that is humanly repugnant, and that the "supernatural" decisions are only those which the penitent finds revolting or practically impossible, is to frustrate the whole

purpose of direction. Some directors, under pretext of acting entirely according to "supernatural principles," are tyrannical and arbitrary. They allow themselves to ignore or overlook the individual needs and weaknesses of their penitents. They have standard answers which are "hard sayings" that admit of no exception and no mitigation, and are always the same, no matter how the case may be altered by circumstances. Thus they take satisfaction in secretly indulging their aggressive instincts.

Obviously, we must be prepared to be told things we do not like and we must meet demands that are supremely exacting. We must be ready for sacrifice. And a good director will not hesitate to impose a sacrifice when he believes that it is the will of God.

But the trouble is that a certain type of spirituality is arbitrary and unfeeling as a matter of deliberate policy. It assumes as a basic axiom of the spiritual life that every soul needs to be humiliated, frustrated and beaten down; that all spontaneous aspirations are suspect by the very fact that they are spontaneous; that everything individual is to be cut away, and that the soul is to be reduced to a state of absolute, machine-like conformity with others in the same fantastic predicament. Result: a procession of robot "victim souls" moving jerkily from exercise to exercise in the spiritual life, secretly hating the whole business and praying for an early death, meanwhile "offering it up" so that the whole may not be lost.

Obviously, no direction at all is preferable to such direction as this. It is the bane of the religious life.

* * * * *

Those who have never stopped to make a distinction between confession and direction may, when the time comes to have a director, fail to take advantage of the situation because they do not know how to make a manifestation of conscience. This is perhaps because they have a vaguely professional and technical idea of spiritual direction: the sort of thing we have outlined and perhaps caricatured above. Direction for them is a strange, efficient, magical system. One comes to the director with complex ascetic problems and he resolves them with appropriate technical solutions. Hence the temptation to falsify the whole thing from the very start by coming in with an "interesting

problem" or a "new case"—just to show how important and how different we are. This can sometimes happen. But usually we are so unimaginative that we simply cannot work up this kind of material, and we become discouraged. Naturally, this is all very foolish.

If we are to take advantage of spiritual direction we must on the one hand avoid inertia and passivity—simply saying nothing and waiting for the "magic" director to read our minds and apply spiritual balm—and on the other we must not falsify and dramatize the situation by the creation of fictitious "problems."

What we need to do is bring the director into contact with our real self, as best we can, and not fear to let him see what is false in our false self. Now this right away implies a relaxed, humble attitude in which we *let go* of ourselves and renounce our unconscious efforts to maintain a facade. We must let the director know what we really think, what we really feel, and what we really desire, even when these things are not altogether honorable. We must be quite frank about our motives, in so far as we can be so.

The mere effort to admit that we are not as unselfish or as zealous as we pretend to be is a great source of grace. Hence we should approach direction in a spirit of humility and compunction, ready to manifest things of which we are not proud! This means that we must abandon all pugnacity about ourselves, and get rid of our instinct for self-defence and self-justification, which is, in itself, the greatest obstacle to grace in our relations with a director.

* * * * *

The trouble is that very often we ourselves do not know what we "really want." And this brings us to an important but very delicate subject. The attitude of religious and of Christians in general toward *the will of God*.

Too often a legalistic concept of the will of God leads to a hypocritical falsification of the interior life. Do we not often unconsciously take it for granted that God is a harsh lawgiver, without interest in the thoughts and desires of our own hearts, seeking only to impose upon us the arbitrary dictates of His own inscrutable, predetermined plans? And yet, as St. Paul has said, we are called to *collaborate with God*. "We are God's co-workers" (I Cor.

3:9). As sons of God, we are called to use our freedom *to help God create His likeness in our own souls*. And, of course, we help Him also to build His kingdom in the world.

In this work of collaboration we are not mere passive and mechanical instruments. Our freedom, our love, our spontaneous contribution to God's work is itself the choicest and most precious effect of His grace. To frustrate this active participation in the work of God is *to frustrate what is most dear to His will*.

This means concretely that in spiritual direction it will be very important to discover what holy and spiritual desires in the soul of the penitent really represent *a special, spontaneous and personal gift which he alone can make to God*. If there is some gift which he alone can give, then almost certainly God asks that gift from him. And a holy, humble and sincere desire may be one of the signs that God asks it!

But this is where a certain unconscious hypocrisy comes in. We are afraid to make this spontaneous gift, afraid of spontaneity itself because we have been so warped by the idea that everything spontaneous is "merely natural" and that for a work to be supernatural it has to go against the grain, it has to frustrate and disgust us.

The truth is, of course, quite different. It is necessary for us to frustrate and overcome our sensual, selfish and exterior self, the compulsive and automatic self that is really incapable of true love. But when we do this we set free our interior, simple self, our godlike self, the image of God, "Christ in us," and we become able to love God with spiritual liberty and make Him, in all simplicity, the gift that He asks of us.

But when we fear spontaneity, we tend to mask our desires and to present them by denying them, as it were. We feel that the director will automatically reject anything that we really desire. We believe that both God and the director are predisposed, in advance, against everything spontaneous. Hence, rather than simply manifest what we really feel, or really desire, we say something else that we imagine we are expected to feel, expected to desire. And we give the impression that we do *not* desire what we secretly desire.

This, for all our good intentions, is plain hypocrisy. The consequences are really quite dangerous, because if this is our con-

cept of the interior life, then we are saying, in effect, that God wills a facade. And we concentrate on building this facade in our own life and perhaps even in the lives of others. The result is the falsification of the whole religious life of our community.

No, we must be perfectly open and simple, without prejudices and without artificial theories about ourselves. We must learn to speak according to our own inner truth, as far as we can perceive it. We must learn to say what we really mean in the depths of our souls, not what we think we are expected to say, not what somebody else has just said. And we must be prepared to take responsibility for our desire, and accept the consequences. This is neither hard nor unnatural, since every man coming into the world is born with this simplicity. It is the simplicity of the child which we all unfortunately lose before we have a chance to make good use of it.

Incidentally this childlike simplicity has nothing to do with the artificially cultivated effrontery of the average teen-ager today. Cynicism is not a deep conviction with him. (He has no deep convictions.) It is only a pose which he adopts because he is insecure and is afraid to lose the approval of his group.

True simplicity implies love and trust — it does not expect to be derided and rejected, any more than it expects to be admired and praised. It simply hopes to be accepted on its own terms. This is the kind of atmosphere which a good director tries to produce: an atmosphere of confidence and friendliness in which the penitent can say anything that is on his mind with the assurance that it will be dealt with *frankly and honestly*. If in trying to be sincere the penitent simply poses, then he must be prepared to take the consequences. But anything he says that is genuine, that really comes from his heart, will be understood and accepted by a wise director. Such real, genuine aspirations of the heart are sometimes very important indications of the will of God for that soul — and sometimes they must be sacrificed.

* * * * *

It is quite possible that we have a director who does not understand us. There is no such thing as a perfect director, and even the most enlightened and sensitive spiritual guide can fail to respond to the delicate resonances which reveal the true inner

secret of one's character. There are people who simply do not "click." The situation may be serious enough for a change of director to be indicated. For instance, if a director simply refuses to listen to our sincere views and rejects all serious discussion of them, it may be a reason to change.

However, do not be too hasty. Give the matter time and thought. Have you really sufficient reason for changing? Supposing he does not understand you thoroughly: supposing there is a kind of wall between you: can you say that even then he has not revealed to you many important things that no one else has yet told you? If that is the case, then God is using him as an instrument, and you should stay with your director, unless it is quite clear that another and more understanding director is available. In any case, a change of director should be made only with prudent consideration, and if possible after consultation with a wise friend, a competent superior, or an alternate confessor—for example at the time of annual retreat or of extraordinary confessions.

What is the value of direction by mail? It should not be overestimated. An occasional letter from some spiritual guide who knows you well, and is a good theologian or a deeply spiritual person: this may be of some value. But direction by mail is seriously handicapped by one important thing: the lack of direct personal contact. In oral spiritual direction, much is communicated without words, even in spite of words. The direct, person-to-person relationship is something that cannot be adequately replaced. Christ Himself said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." There is a special spiritual presence of Christ in direct personal conversation, which guarantees a deeper and more intimate expression of the whole truth.

Of course, letters from a really good director are perhaps better than direct contact with a bad one. But most good directors have very little time to write long letters. They have too many other things to do.

Book Reviews

THE MASS EXPLAINED. By Monsignor Chevrot. Translated by P. Holland-Smith. The Liturgical Press. Collegeville, Minnesota, 1958. Pp. 241. Cloth, \$3.75.

Our Mass Explained is a scholarly compendium of the historical, theological, and devotional aspects of the Holy Sacrifice. Throughout the entire treatise, emphasis is constantly focused upon the essential universality of the Eucharistic Act and upon the consequent necessity of corporate worship through the instrumentality of the Missal—thus making *Our Mass* “a communal prayer... the reunion of the Christian family around its Head, Jesus Christ.” (p. 11) The book is principally historical in nature, carefully tracing the development of the Liturgy of the Mass from its initial institution at the Last Supper, through its re-enactment in the earliest Eucharistic assemblies; its later determination in various rites, particularly, the Roman rite; its transition from the ancient Pontifical form to the ceremony as we know it today. However, neither the doctrinal nor devotional phases are curtailed. Rather, all three viewpoints, as the book’s sub-title would indicate, are considered concurrently.

An accurate study of the Eucharist as Sacrifice and sacrament is presented in the light of both positive and scholastic theology; and each act of this divine drama is admirably depicted as a powerful force for deepening the interior spirit of prayer in each participant, and for subsequently diffusing the same spirit throughout the milieu in which he lives. The explanations and commentaries on the various prayers of the Mass are richly documented with references to Sacred Scripture, Church Fathers, and key liturgists.

Interpretations are in accordance with orthodox theological teaching. Applications to Christian life are prudent and sound.

The author, obviously a true Benedictine liturgist, lightens the sublime gravity of his subject, by recording an occasional anecdote, and even more, by simply and delicately weaving into the harmonious development of the central theme, a wealth of interesting details concerning the origin of the various liturgical customs and the impact of the Church’s cardinal devotion on the lives of great men and women throughout the ages.

Set in a plain but clear format, with very few mis-prints, this first edition of *Our Mass Explained* will serve as a valuable reference for any study on the Mass; and will be received by religious and laity alike, as an inspiring piece of spiritual literature—giving the reader an appreciation of the Mass like unto that experienced by the celebrated blessed historian, Augustine Thierry, who, when Cardinal Perraud would read to him the prayers of the Ordinary of the Mass, was wont to exclaim: “How beautiful it is... how noble, and how profound!” (p. 90)

Sister Ann Rita, G.N.S.H.
Buffalo, New York

WHAT IS THE TRINITY? By Bernard Piatek. The twentieth century encyclopedia of Catholicism, v. 17. Hawthorn Books, New York, 1959. Pp. 156. Cloth, \$2.95.

This volume, like the collection to which it belongs, is designed for a wide circle of interested readers. The first of three main parts is a sixty-page scriptural study of the Blessed Trinity, from the Old Testa-

ment preparation to its actual revelation with the coming of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church. The Knox version of the Bible is used. Adhering closely to the gradual unfolding of the mystery of God's inner life, the author shows how Jesus, particularly on evidence of the Synoptic Gospels, adapted himself to the Jewish mentality in unveiling it a little at a time, a process which required the Spirit of Pentecost for its completion.

The remaining two parts deal with twenty centuries of trinitarian faith and reflection in the Christian East and in the West: errors and defense of the mystery, repeated attempts to clarify, explain, penetrate, and express it accurately in the Creed and Rules of Faith; speculation and loving contemplation. The volume closes with the application of the mystery of the Trinity to the spiritual and social life.

There are a few blemishes in the English translation, among which the following. The elimination of a few subheadings and of four simple schemes, and the running together of some paragraphs in the interest of compression has not always helped the clarity of an already concise treatment. There are a few mistakes in the biblical references. A misprint on p. 121 results in the erroneous statement that the Father is a proceeding person; on p. 139 'World' for 'Word' makes the sentence meaningless. The author's comment on p. 73 is based on the more ancient reading of John 7:37-39 (also followed by Pius XII in the encyclical on the Sacred Heart), which has the streams of living water (Spirit) coming from Christ's open heart. A more sensitive translator would have modified the Knox version to bring it in line with the point made by the author.

But despite these and other blemishes, the reviewer does not hesitate to recommend this volume. There is

much in it to warrant such a recommendation. To cover so vast and complex a subject in so small a compass involved brevity of treatment, which in this case does not mean superficiality. It is a matter for special congratulations that the author includes Greek and Latin theology on the Trinity, which represent different but fruitful approaches to the mystery of mysteries.

Michael Marx, O.S.B.
St. Joseph, Minnesota

POPE JOHN XXIII. By Andrea Lazzarini. Herder & Herder, New York, 1959. Pp. 145. Cloth, \$3.25.

To a world bursting with curiosity about the reigning Pontiff, Lazzarini's book gives some of the answers. His pen seems almost as facile as it is swift. The intriguing detail presumably flows from his quarter-century connection with *L'Osservatore Romano*, for such a combination of highlights and details warrants intimacy both with the person and his environment.

There is something like a skyline view of the Pope's family background, education and priestly vocation. From the first glimpse of the 21-year-old priest and on through the fifty-six years which preceded his elevation to the Papacy one comes to understand why this genial Father on the Chair of St. Peter could not be otherwise. Always the same story of pastorship (whether in the East, France, Venice or Rome) vigilance, devotion and universal love rooted in simplicity. In a few more than one hundred pages there emerges a 77-year-old Pontiff unique because his hand is ever raised in blessing the poor, the imprisoned, the needy in much the same way that the hand of the God-Man, whose Vicar he is, extended a blessing to those who sought and to those who did not dare

to seek. A careful perusal of the 25 pages of notes will be a rewarding venture, and a study of the illustrations leaves the reader smiling and feeling quite comfortable.

Sister Mary Lourdes
Rochester, New York

CATHERINE LABOURE AND THE MODERN APPARITIONS OF OUR LADY. By Abbe Omer Englebert. Translated from the French by Alastair Guinan, P. J. Kenedy & Sons, New York, 1959. Pp. 243. Cloth, \$3.95.

Since, according to l'Abbe Engelbert, "a mystic is one attuned to mystery," this book is about mystics—eighteen persons to whom Our Blessed Mother appeared between the years 1830 and 1933 and instructed about God's ways with men. The first section of the book tells the life of Catherine Laboure simply, briefly. From the account Catherine emerges as the quiet, retiring old nun that one would expect a woman to be, one who could keep secret Mary's apparitions to her for forty-six years. The author devotes fewer pages to her long life as a religious than he does to the account of the conversion of Alphonse Ratisbonne through the power of the miraculous medal—a chapter that could well have been omitted.

The second section deals with Our Lady's appearances from that at La Salette to that at Banneux. Though each apparition differs from every other one, the author sees a unity in them in that Mary's message is always the same: prayer and penance to avert God's avenging hand. Her confidants are alike, too, in that all were poor, simple, unletter—"unable, even were they to combine all their abilities to write a letter without making mistakes. . . ."! In these apparitions one sees various facets of Mary's role as Mother of all men; she is Virgin of the Poor, Our Lady of Hope,

Our Lady of the Rosary, the Virgin of the Golden Heart. The devotions she encourages are those accessible to all—the wearing of the miraculous medal, of the scapular; devout recitation of the Rosary.

The final section of the book, The Significance of the Apparitions, underlines the meaning of Mary's visitations that are already evident to the thoughtful reader. Mary comes to urge all men to follow the narrow way to eternal salvation and to encourage them by proffering her powerful help if they will but ask for it.

This well-translated book is worth reading, clear, with thesis simply stated and developed. The reviewer would have liked to have the author include in the unity that he sees in the apparitions a few comments relative to the lives of those to whom Mary appeared. It would have been well had the author stressed that the life of sacrifice demanded of the children of Beauraing and Banneux is to be found in the married state and not in the religious life.

Sister M. Wilma Lyle, O.S.B.
Yankton, South Dakota

ALL FOR THE KING'S DELIGHT. By Ferdinand Valentine, O.P. The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland, 1958. Pp. 280. Cloth, \$3.95.

In the Foreword Father Ferdinand explains the purpose of this second book on chastity. "In a former volume we considered the meaning of the religious sister's chaste dedication to Christ and its relationship with the Christian apostolate. The present volume is concerned with her struggle to keep faithful to her plighted troth." In his treatment of this material the author makes three main divisions: Part I, The Art of Loving, sets down the principles involved; Part II, Factors of Disturbance, considers obstacles met in the practice of religious chastity both in

the way of occupational and personal hazards: Part III, *The Grand Strategy*, examines the use of penance and mortification in the preservation of this virtue.

The headings listed in the appendices promise an excellent development. A hasty perusal of the chapter headings would lead one to look for specific helps toward a more fruitful virginity: between a maudlin, sentimental attachment to others and a desiccated, self-centered life. On the whole, however, the development of each topic seems too independent. Sensing this himself, Father Ferdinand states in the chapter on mortification: "The reader must understand that the following pages make no pretense of being a complete treatise in mortification. We are concerned wholly and entirely with virginal chastity, and the right strategy to be adopted in its defense. Any more formal and exhaustive approach would obscure the main issue." It seems to me the author fell into the trap himself. For the most part the same treatment of the topics could have been used in any treatise on the religious life. The stress on their implications regarding chastity is not clearly made.

Furthermore, no one will dispute the necessity for insistence on penance, mortification, and discipline of the faculties in the exercise of this virtue. However, because chastity is usually treated in a negative manner, it is popularly regarded — though falsely — as a way of life that is without love and without joy. As Carol Houselander has said, "We no longer think of virginity as the first fruits laid upon the fire of sacrifice, but rather as a windfall of green apples, which are hard and sour because the sun has never penetrated them and warmed them at the core."

All for the King's Delight had promised aids for a richer living of

the life of chastity. Unfortunately, it falls short of its promise.

Sister Mary Eleanor Mahoney, O.P.
Larchmont, New York

THE MASS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. By Aemiliana Loehr. Translated by I. T. Hale. Foreword by Damasus Winzen, O.S.B. Longmans, Green, & Co., London, 1958. Volume I: From Advent to Palm Sunday, xix-330. Cloth, \$4.50.

This second version of the celebrated book *The Year of Our Lord* covers nearly all the Masses of the temporal cycle. Steeped as she is in the imaginative language of the Scriptures and in the allegorical expression of the Fathers, Dame Aemiliana has attempted to describe, not to explain, the liturgy in that language and expression.

Dame Aemiliana is a Benedictine nun of Holy Cross Abbey at Herstelle-an-der-Wesen, where she studied under the scholarly Dom Odo Casel. From him she learned the meaning of the Mysterium: "the presence of the saving action of Christ in the Church for the Church's salvation and healing." Her thorough appreciation of it is evident on every page of her description. (The expression of her understanding of Dom Odo's theory bears comparison with a criticism of it in Louis Bouyer's *Liturgical Piety*, pp. 86-99.)

In this translation irregularities in punctuation obscure the thought from time to time; typographical errors (e.g., "mattins" and "annoints") and inconsistency in the use of capitals are too frequent.

Six German editions and translations into French, Dutch, Spanish, Italian, and English attest to the recognized value of this book.

Sister Maria Assunta, C.S.C.
Notre Dame, Indiana

**A wealth of fine reading
from the world of Catholic
thought and experience**

Lucinie By M. L. PASCAL DASQUE. A beautiful and subtly wrought novel dealing with the mystical experience of a young French nun in Algeria. **\$3.75**

Miracle at Fatima By WILHELM HUNERMANN. A dramatic account, in story form, of the extraordinary events that took place in 1917 when Our Lady appeared to three young children at Fatima, Portugal. **\$3.95**

Back to Jesus By JACQUES LECLERCQ. A thoughtful work for the laity on Christian morality that presents the principles of the spiritual life in their practical application. **\$3.95**

Hammer and Fire By RAPHAEL SIMON, O.C.S.O. How the individual, through his own spiritual works, and with the aid of the church, may find true happiness—and consequent mental peace—in union with God. **\$3.95**

Louise de Marillac By J. CALVET. The fascinating life of the co-foundress of the Sisters of Charity, who was a wife and mother before she consecrated her widowhood to the service of the poor. **\$4.95**

Two Revised Editions of Standard Works

EXTERNALS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

By JOHN F. SULLIVAN, D.D. Revised by John C. O'Leary **\$4.50**

MARY IN OUR LIFE

By WILLIAM C. MOST **\$4.50**

Now at your bookstore

P. J. KENEDY & SONS

In Canada: Thomas Nelson & Sons

(Canada), Limited

THEMES OF THEOLOGY

GOD AMONG MEN (Vol. 2)

Translated and edited by Bernard G. Murchland, C.S.C.

A vital re-thinking of the great themes of the New Testament and a profound assessment of the meaning of Christianity in terms of man's new understanding of himself.

JUST RELEASED

\$4.50

GOD SPEAKS (Vol. 1)

Translated and edited by Bernard G. Murchland, C.S.C.

On the great themes of the Old Testament, with an important re-examination of the meaning of man in historical terms. "... an admirable popular work . . ."

RECENTLY RELEASED

\$3.95

AT ALL BOOKSTORES

FIDES PUBLISHERS

NOTRE DAME, IND.

FREE BROCHURE

SISTERS APPAREL

ROBES

SLIPS and HALF SLIPS

HOSE (nylon or cotton)

ALBS

ALTAR LINEN

ART LINEN

VESTMENTS

SURPLICES

Altar Boy's CASSOCKS

JOHN F. SAUB

389 - 17th Street S. E.

CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

Ecclesiastical Goods of Distinction

NOR SCRIP NOR SHOES

REV. JOHN McGOEY

Father McGoeY recounts his early life, years in China as a missionary, the relief work in China, the Communist invasion, subsequent return to Canada and missionary work in the Bahamas. Father McGoeY's is a story of dedication without self-concern or compromise, but never so serious as to be without the saving grace of laughter even in the midst of chronic illness. "This unusual life is recommended for public and private reading." — Kilian McDonnell, O.S.B.

\$4.00

LITTLE BROWN & COMPANY

34 - Beacon Street

Boston 6, Mass.

Since the publication of Dom Gueranger's The Liturgical Year a century ago, no commentary on the Church's worship has been acclaimed as widely, translated into as many languages, or influenced religious formation of as many persons as Dr. Pius Parsch's DAS JAHR DES HEILES, now available under the title



THE CHURCH'S YEAR OF GRACE

English edition by
Rev. William G. Heidt, O.S.B.

- ◆ profusely illustrated with full color and meaningful line drawings
- ◆ all volumes revised according to recent changes in rubrics for Missal and Breviary
- ◆ new feasts added in proper sequence

Comprehensive—

Each day's liturgy is treated at length—its holy Mass, its saints, its Divine Office; each nuance in the Church Year receives special attention, and many associated topics are developed at the opportune occasion.

Practical—

The style is primarily spiritual, making the riches of the missal, breviary, ritual, and liturgical year a source of immediate, practical interior growth and edification.

Proven—

The continuing demand for the German edition has brought it to the current FOURTEENTH edition; moreover the work has already been translated into twelve languages, with others in preparation.

In Five Volumes: 2,136 pages

Vol. 1—Advent to Candlemas

Vol. 2—Septuagesima to Holy Saturday

Vol. 3—Easter to Pentecost

Vol. 4—June, July, August

Vol. 5—September, October, November

Each volume: paper \$2.75; cloth \$4.00

15% DISCOUNT on complete sets

LITURGICAL PRESS, Collegeville, Minn.



NEW! from NEWMAN

LAMPS OF LOVE

by Louis Colin, C.S.S.R.

Translated by Sister David Mary, S.N.J.H.

As the author says, the purpose of this book is to "recall to forgetful or ignorant souls the principal sources of love, and to teach all to utilize them to the utmost." \$4.00

ATHLETE OF CHRIST

St. Nicholas of Flue, 1417-1487

by Marie McSwigan

Miss McSwigan tells the story of Nicholas, patron saint of the Swiss people, with warmth, colorful detail - and lots of surprises. \$3.25

WOMEN, WORDS AND WISDOM

by Solange Hertz

A Catholic wife and mother, Solange Hertz, combines a charming and urbane sense of humor with an unusual intimacy with the greatest of the Church's spiritual authors.

\$3.50

CATHOLIC REFORMER

by Paul Hallet

A life of St. Cajetan of Thiene, one of the most powerful leaders of the Church's reform movement before and after the Protestant revolt.

\$3.50

THE INTELLECTUAL LIFE

by A. D. Sertillanges, O.P.

Translated by Mary Ryan

Father Sertillanges' book has long been a vade mecum to students and scholars, and has afforded encouragement and guidance to those beginning a life of active dedication to Truth.

Cloth \$3.00

Paper \$1.50

Wherever Good Books Are Sold

THE NEWMAN PRESS

Westminster, Maryland